

OHIO HISTORY CONNECTION
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 11, 2025 – 1:00PM
OHC – Cardinal Classroom

Trustees Present: Charles Moses (President), Ann Bair (Vice President), Alex Hastie (Secretary), Jon Elsasser, Rich Hillis, Guadalupe Valasquez, Anthony Joseph, Jen Miller, Kathleen Russell, Betty Montgomery, Chris Samuels, Edmund Sargas

Trustees Absent: Melody Young (Treasurer), Bob Roach

Trustees on Team: Renu Ramankutty Steve Coon, Chris Gillcrist, Janenne Allen

Ex Officios Present:

Ex Officios on Team: Jana Fornario, Designee for Chancellor, Ohio Department of Higher Education

Staff & Others Present: Megan Wood, Jeff Ward, Steve George, Jen Aultman, Ann Ruege, Diana Welling, Theresa Hopewood, Jerry Dannemiller, Brenda Estes, Kevin Bohner, Wes Newhouse, (General Counsel), Amy Kuhlman (General Counsel)

I. Call to Order

President Charles Moses called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Mr. Moses welcomed our two new board members, Second Chief Samples and Judge Sargus. Everyone in the room gave an introduction of themselves.

Mr. Moses spoke about the Poindexter Village project. Poindexter Village is one of the first public housing developments in the country. Franklin Roosevelt dedicated the project on October 12th, 1940. There were originally 35 or 36 buildings in the housing project. There are two buildings now left. This project will become a gathering spot for Ohio. There have been a few famous people that came to the housing authority, Martin Luther King and other presidential candidates along the way. Stories from people who lived there are still helping us try to raise money for the project. When the project is complete, it will keep the stories alive. It's worth a visit to the site.

Mr. Hillis shared that the project is a transformational museum because it bridges and shows the growth of the communities.

Executive Director's Report

Mrs. Wood spoke about the video that was shown at the beginning of the meeting.

Mrs. Wood welcomed everyone to our second quarter meeting for the fiscal year 2026. today's meeting.

Mrs. Wood referenced the major projects dashboard on page 3 in the packet. All of the projects are green. Project status is based on scope, budget and timeline. Some of the projects turn green this time because of adjusted timeline for new expectations like Buckeye PAST and Ohio River Museum. Some turned green because of clarified the scope like Ohio Village and Campus 2.OH. Poindexter Village has positive progress around fundraising. A big variable here moving forward in timing and scope has to do with the next state capital budget. In the traditional planning process, a capital budget tends to be passed around the end of the fiscal year in June, with funds becoming available around 90 days after the passage of the budget in the fall, September or October. There is the possibility that the capital budget not being ready until later next calendar year. There will be planning a scenario for our major projects.

Capital budget: Staff have submitted the administrative budget to the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) and Jen Altman and Megan Wood met with OBM Director and some of the OBM staff around OHC priorities. This is the administrative part of the process. The roll up of the FY27/28 request is \$131M. This was an opportunity to outline what was needed. There is an extraordinary ask around the work of Campus 2.OH strategic initiative.

Mrs. Wood asked Carlos Lugo, department manager for facilities and major projects to share some details around the \$80M ask for the Ohio History Center.

Mr. Lugo mentioned that the Campus 2.OH strategic initiative that OHC has been working on for the last several years is right on time. Enhancing the visitor experience is one of the main goals of that initiative and revitalizing the 50-year-old campus. The campus is now in the National Register of Historic Buildings. This began with the redevelopment of and work on campus on the North End of the campus, the Collections Care Center which opened in 2024 around \$22 million project state-of-the-art facility for the collections processing and storage. Ohio Village is next in our process. The ground breaking was in September and work is ongoing. There's lots of infrastructure work

underground. The main portion of the work is going to be visible improvements for our visitors and members.

Next on the list is the Center. The capital request is \$83 million. This work has been guided by conversations with members master planners, national firms, local firms, and staff. The recommendations include ADA accessibility, elevator access, relocating the front desk and store to plaza level; recreating circulation of the museum floor; recreating skylight, better circulation; gallery for visiting exhibitions. This plan will raise the Doughboy sculpture and repair the entire access area next. Relocating the front desk gives a café to the Plaza level is one of the main goals for the project; making a stronger connection to Ohio Village so it's more visible when you're in the center space that visitors can see out towards the village in a clearer way.

Mr. Dannemiller shared a high-level detail of the progress on the Poindexter Village African American Museum. Mr. Dannemiller shared design and construction progress, fundraising campaign progress and a groundbreaking date.

Mrs. Wood recognized that Anthony Joseph, president of White Castle has agreed to be part of this project too.

Design and construction –

- a. RFQ for a construction manager released December 2025
- b. A team of get together every week and work with Moody Nolan architects to go page by page by page through design documentation Finalizing design documentation.
- c. RFP for the construction partner will go out in Spring 2026
- d. Construction underway Summer 2026
- e. Museum opening early 2028.

Fundraising Campaign update –

- a. \$29M campaign goal

Timeline – April 2026 –

- a. Quiet phase - cultivation and leadership giving is underway
- b. Public phase – after groundbreaking
- c. Grassroots and community phase –
- d. Groundbreaking, May 6, 2026

Ms. Miller shared that she had the honor of going to the National Public Housing Museum in Chicago that just opened earlier this year. The ideas were similar. Ms. Miller encouraged everyone to explore it if they are able.

II. Consent Agenda

Mr. Moses entertained a motion and a vote to approve the consent agenda minutes from August 29, 2025, board meeting, November 1, 2025, executive committee meeting, Adelphi bank, privacy policy revision, and name change resolution.

Mr. Hillis made a motion to accept, Mr. Elsasser seconded the motion. Everyone else was in favor. The motion to approve the entire consent agenda was unanimously approved.

III. Committee Reports

Governance Committee

Mr. Joseph shared the committee's focus has been on looking ahead at needs of the board. A matrix has been created that captures terms, regions, industries, committee work. There are open slots for the governor appointed seats. The priority is more geographic diversity.

The Governance Committee has a motion to elect Chris Samples to the Board of Trustees for three-year term beginning December 11th, 2025.

All members were in favor and approved the motion to elect Mr. Samples for a three-year term.

Sites and Real Estate Committee

Ms. Russell shared that Alex Hastie generously transferred his committee chairmanship over to her. Chris Gilchrist has also agreed to be on the Sites and Real Estate Committee.

Ms. Aultman shared that the committee continues to work on lots of things but especially focuses on the site's reassessment and the restructuring of the site system. Ms. Aultman referenced page 42 of the board packet regarding the site transfer policy. Ohio History Connection has a policy in place about site transfer, bringing sites into our system or moving them out of our system. Staff worked with Mr. Newhouse and looked at some changes that need to be made to that policy. There is a draft of that policy ready, and it's been shared with the Sites and Real Estate committee. The policy will be coming before the full board in the Spring.

There's a ground lease next to Octagon. There's a caretaker home there and a couple owns the house. They have a ground place with OHC and they're asking for another 10-year lease. OHC will give them an additional 10 years.

Fort Ancient, the Cedar Oaks Wellness Center has to cross state property, property that OHC stewards to reach their facilities. The state only gives 15-year easements.

Finance Committee FY26 – Final Budget

Mr. Ward shared six weeks ago the Finance Committee met with the audit team and the auditors presented a clean audit. Mr. Ward thanked the accounting team for their great work. The auditors did share a concern about our debt assets. This was on the heels of the reduction in force, which from a financial standpoint was needed to get the expenses reduced.

FY2026 YTD Overview as of September 30, 2025

Mr. Ward referenced page 45 of the board packet. Total support and revenue, \$8.4M, is \$1.3M less than budget. Total expense is \$7.5M and is \$2.0M less than budget, which gives an operating surplus of \$900K. This is about \$700K better than where numbers were projected to be at the end of the quarter. Additionally, we had a \$900K gain in investments that has resulted in a net surplus year to date of \$1.8M, which was \$1.6M better than projection. Support & Revenue line; the \$1.3M negative variance was related to our capital spending throughout the first quarter. Capital underspent by \$1.2M, contracts/grants underspent by \$427K, contributions ahead by \$236K, earned revenues; admissions, retail sales, and membership sales programs were ahead by \$35K, variances on our expenses are lower by \$2M; a big chunk of that is related to capital (noted earlier). Other savings include salary/fringe; lower by \$234K through the first quarter. The RIF happened on October 1 (2nd quarter). That was not reflected in the first quarter numbers. In summary, the primary funding sources finish the first quarter with a positive operating surplus. The operating (GRF), the earned revenues that are generated as well as some of the grants had a positive bottom line of \$578K for the quarter. The non-operating (capital projects and foundation) finished ahead by \$287K. Through the first quarter there is an operating surplus of \$865K. However, there is an existing debt to the Foundation \$3.3M covering past deficits from several years ago. OHC must also pay back \$4.75M that started at \$5.5M for the Moundbuilders Country Club lease buyout. It has been paid down to \$4.75M at this point.

Ms. Bair inquired if that is a foundation debt has accumulating interest. Mr. Ward responded no, the foundation debt is interest free. The Fidelity debt (related to lease buyout) we pay 5.5%.

Fundraising Committee

Ms. Ruege extended her gratitude to those who have already contributed and to those who are still considering their support of the Ohio Commission. Your generosity and commitment are truly invaluable to our mission.

The fundraising committee convened via Microsoft Teams on November 18th. The committee is seeking board approval for the establishment of a new named endowment, the Paul Henri and Erica Bourguignon Fine Arts Endowment. This fund is intended to advance the legacy of Paul

Henry Bourignon and by supporting exhibits, presentations and related initiatives, thereby ensuring the preservation, visibility and continued relevance of his collection. OHC has an exhibit featuring him in our Creative Ohio gallery downstairs. This endowment will be established with an initial gift of \$100,000, which has already been received. Ms. Ruege requested a motion from the Board to approve the creation of this endowment.

Mr. Joseph and Mr. Hillis both seconded the motion to approve.

Government Relations

Mr. Boehner mentioned anticipating a capital reappropriations bill sometime in February that should move pretty quickly. Anticipating that actual capital budget coming sometime in the early summer, June time period. Do not anticipate the budget passing until after the election. This is subject to change.

Everyone should have been invited to a Collections Care center tour. Legislators and staff have been invited to tour the new Collections Care center on January 14th, 21st and 28th at 9:00 a.m. Fifteen legislators or staff have RSVP so far.

Within the next calendar year, before the election, Mr. Hillis, Mr. Moses and Mr. Boehner will be working on inviting both the presumptive nominees for governor, Vivek Ramaswamy and Dr. Acton to come speak to the board at some point.

Ms. Miller inquired if we're thinking of a way to honor Governor DeWine or invite him to come.

Mr. George will be having lunch with one of the governor's people and will bring this up.

Mr. Moses thanked the board members for all their work as board members. He reminded everyone of the need to raise money and how important contributions are when we're in front of a major entity that the board supports it 100% is a very important point. The board members are the best ambassadors that the place has because trustees are not getting paid to do this. Trustees are doing this because we love it and we believe in the mission of the organization. That is a compelling message to anybody, whether they're a legislator, donor or a person who has an important network that may help us. If we can rededicate ourselves to those things coming up in 2026, it's going to be a very interesting year with a lot of accomplishments.

IV. New Business

V. Executive session

Mr. Moses requested a motion to recess into Executive Session; the meeting convened into Executive Session at 2:01 p.m.

The board emerged from Executive Session and the meeting adjourned at 2:52 p.m.



Alex Hastie, Secretary

12/18/25

Date

Charles R. Moses, President

Date

Prepared by Theresa Hopewood